

Support and Opposition for Invading Iraq: Did the President's Speech Make a Difference?

by
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Issue: President Bush has been seeking support for the Invasion of Iraq both within the U.S. and Internationally. The strong Republican victory in recent elections and the unanimous UN support for forcing Saddam Hussein to allow UN weapons inspectors into Iraq to insure that all weapons of mass destruction are destroyed are indications that Bush has been successful. This research brief addresses the issue of support and opposition to invading Iraq within the San Antonio Metropolitan Statistical Area. Data were collected prior to and after President Bush addressed the nation seeking broad citizen support for his plan, allowing us to ascertain whether or not his speech impacted the attitudes of potential voters.

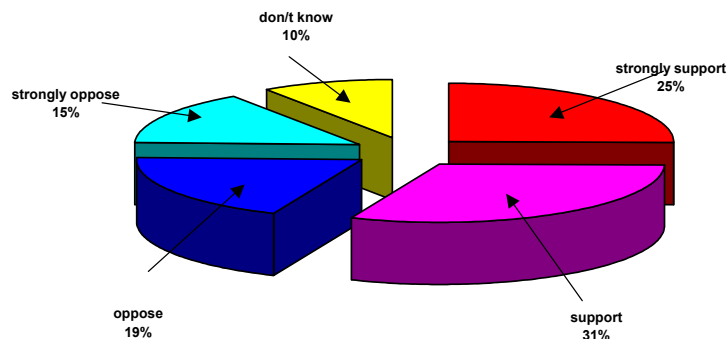
Data: The annual San Antonio Survey is a probability study conducted by telephone to a stratified random sample of adults with telephones. Questions are designed to measure San Antonians' attitudes about and perceptions regarding a variety of contemporary issues. Survey data were collected through UTSA's Hispanic Research Center/ Metropolitan Research and Policy Institute and the Survey Research Lab. Data were collected October 5-14, 2002. The sample for this survey was comprised of 457 adults with telephones living in the San Antonio SMSA. The standard error of the entire sample is +/- 4.6 percent with a 95 percent confidence level. Survey results were weighted by sex and race/ethnicity according to 2000 Census data for Bexar County.

Question: Respondents were asked to respond to the following:

President Bush has been attempting to build national and international support for a plan to invade Iraq. Please tell us how strongly you support or oppose the plan to invade Iraq. Response categories included; Strongly support; Support; Oppose; Strongly oppose; and Don't Know.

Results: As shown in Figure 1, in the complete sample (everyone who responded to the survey), slightly over one fourth of respondents strongly support the plan and about three in ten supported the plan.

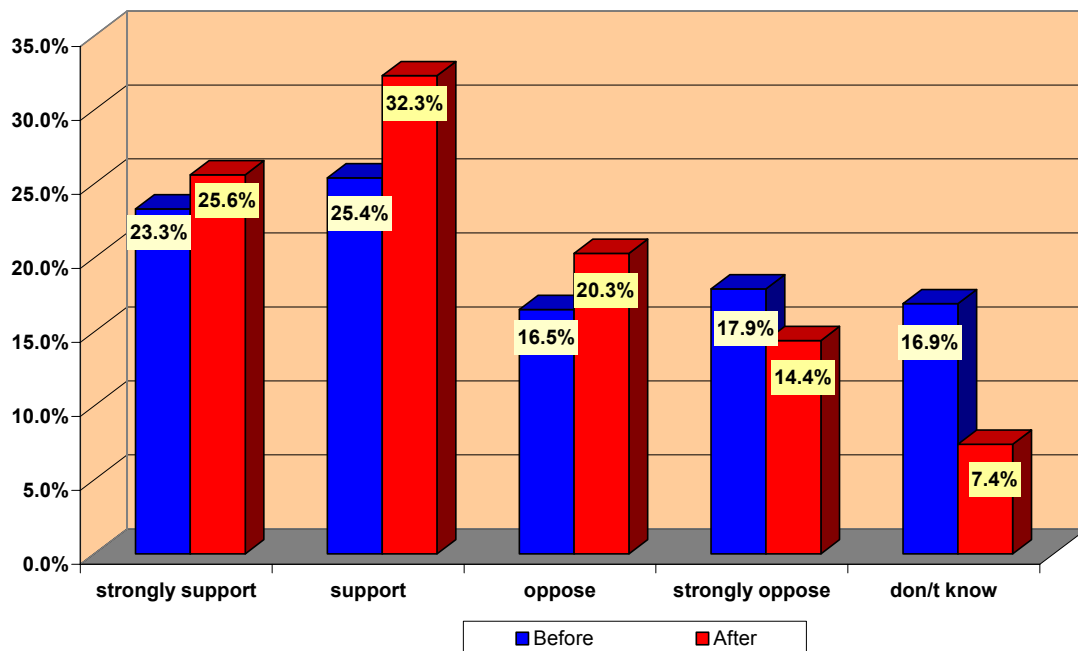
Figure 1: Support/Oppose Invading Iraq



Nineteen percent of respondents said they opposed the plan, 15% said they strongly opposed the plan while 10% responded, “don’t know.”

On Monday evening, October 7, 2002 President Bush gave a televised speech regarding his proposal to invade Iraq. Prior to the President’s speech, political analysts indicated that while he sought broad citizen support for his plan, and that he hoped to influence those who “did not know” to understand the issue better. Figure 2 indicates the impact of the President’s speech on the overall results¹. It seems very clear that he picked up support for the invasion, and that much of that support likely occurred from those who fell into the “don’t know” category. Note that the percentage of “don’t know” responses decreased about 9.4% after Bush’s speech and those supporting the invasion increased about 6.9% while those strongly supporting increased by 2.3%. Those strongly opposing the invasion decreased by 3.5%, while those opposing the invasion increased by 3.8%. The changes in support/opposition

Figure 2: Support/Oppose Invading Iraq Before and After Presidents Speech



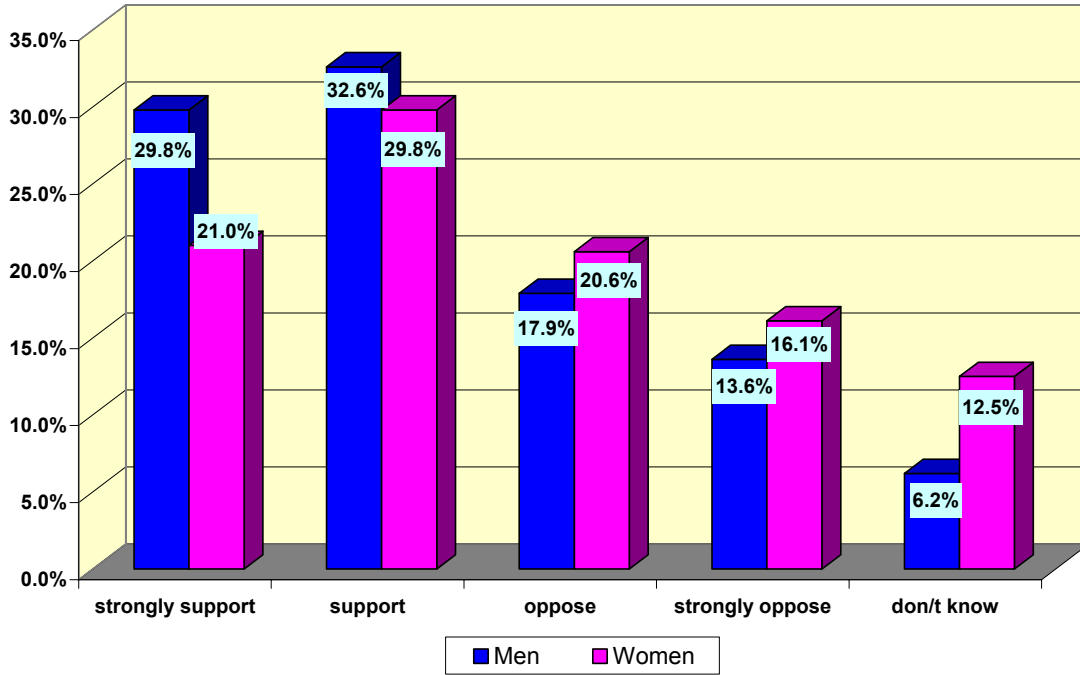
which occurred are unlikely due to chance ($p=.032$) and moderate in strength ($V=.132$).

In the complete sample, women were more likely to strongly oppose and oppose the invasion than were men in the sample (see Figure 3). In addition, women were almost twice as likely as men to say they “did not know” whether to support or oppose

¹ Unless noted as “Before Speech” or “After Speech” data include complete sample results. Results labeled “Before Speech” include only those surveyed before the speech or during the evening he was speaking. Results labeled “After Speech” include only those surveyed on days after the speech.

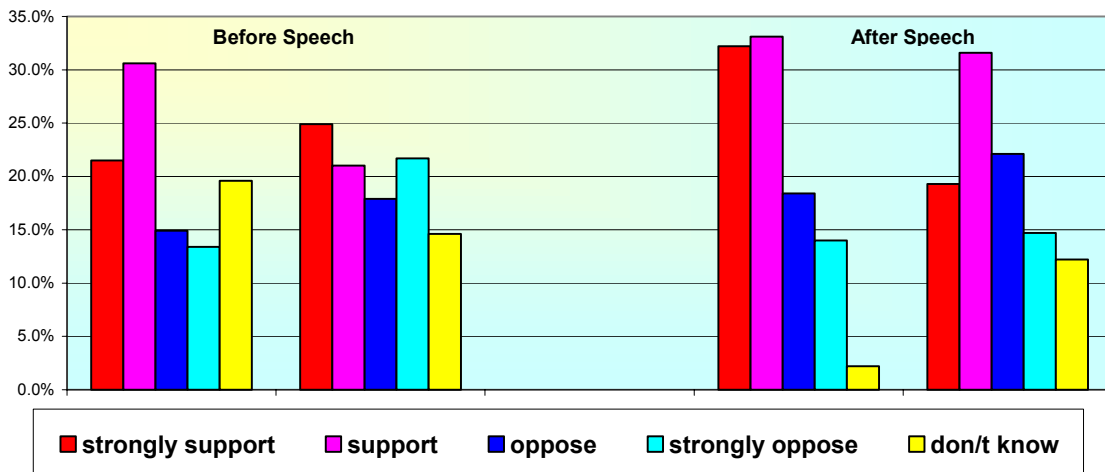
the proposed invasion (12.5% women; 6.2% men). Again, these differences are not likely due to chance ($p=.05$) and the relationship is moderate in strength ($V=.144$).

Figure 3: Support/Oppose Invading Iraq by Sex



As shown in Figure 4, the President’s speech seems to have had a stronger impact on men in the Bexar County area. Before the speech, 21.5% of men and 24.9% of women strongly supported the invasion, while 30.6% of men and 21% of women supported it. About 15% (14.9%) of men and 17.9 % of women opposed the plan, and 13.4% of men and 21.7% of women strongly opposed the proposal. Among women 14.6 % said they “did not know,” while 19.6% of men were in this category. Results are not statistically significant ($p=.601$) but are moderately strong ($V=.158$).

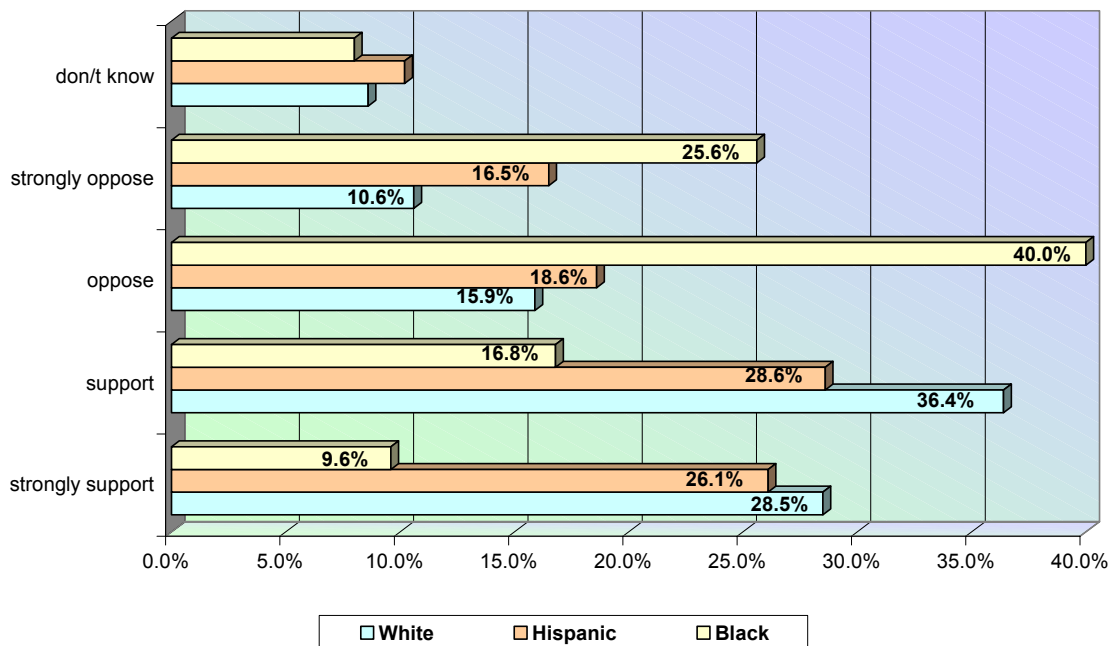
Figure 4: Impact of Presidents Speech on Men's and Women's Support/Opposition to Invading Iraq



After the president’s speech, strong support among men increased to 32.2%, an increase of 10.7%, while strong support among women decreased 5.6% to 19.3% (See Figure 4). Support among men increased slightly to 33.1%, while support among women jumped over 10% to 31.6%. Note that the “don’t know” category for women dropped only slightly from 14.6% to 12.2%, while among men, “don’t know” responses dropped dramatically from 19.6% to 2.2%. Among both men and women those strongly opposed decreased slightly, and those opposed increased somewhat (see Figure 3). Results are statistically significant ($p=.001$) and the differences between men and women are strong ($V=.228$).

As depicted in Figure 5, African Americans/Blacks were most likely to oppose the invasion (40%) and to strongly oppose the invasion (25.6%) than were Whites (15.9%; 10.6% respectively) and Hispanic/Mexican Americans (16.5%, 10.2% respectively). Whites were more likely to support (36.4%) and strongly support (28.5%) than the other race/ethnic groups although the Hispanic/Mexican American percentages are very close to the white percentages for those who strongly supported the invasion (26.1%; 28.6% supported). Among Black/African Americans only 16.8% said they supported invading Iraq, while a mere 9.2% strongly supported the plan. Results were statistically significant ($p=.006$) and moderate in strength ($V=.157$).

Figure 5: Support/Oppose Invading Iraq by Race/Ethnicity



Looking at results before and after the President’s speech (see Figures 6 and 7), we see important decreases in the “don’t know” responses for Whites (11,8% to 7.7%) and Hispanic /Mexican Americans (22.7% to 6.%)².

Figure 6: Support/Oppose Invading Iraq by Race/Ethnicity Before President’s Speech

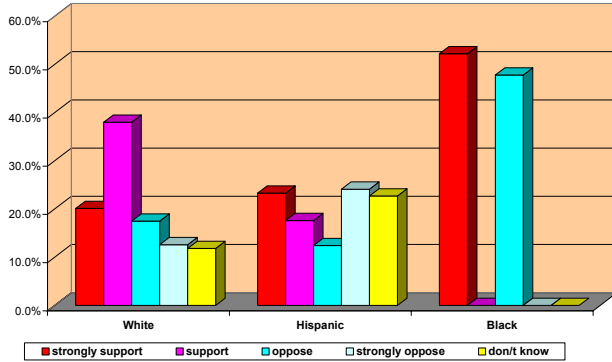
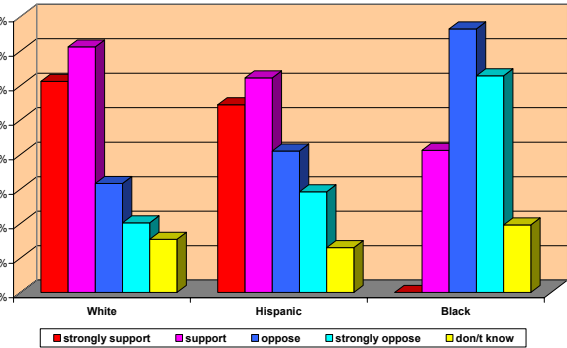


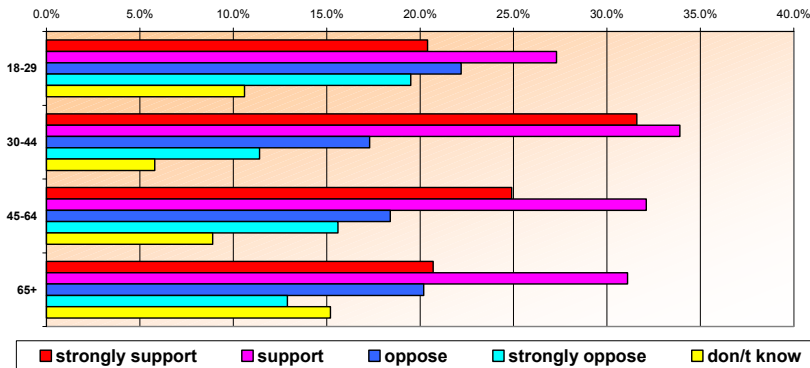
Figure 7: Support/Oppose Invading Iraq by Race/Ethnicity After President’s Speech



In addition, strong support among Whites jumped from 20.1% to 30.6% and among Hispanic/Mexican Americans increased from 23.3% to 27.7%. Support decreased slightly for Whites (38.0% to 35.6%) and jumped among Hispanic/Mexican Americans (17.6% to 31.1%.)

As shown in Figure 8, those aged 65 and older had the largest percentage in the “don’t know” category (15.2%) compared to 10.6% of those aged 18-29, 8.9% of those aged 49-64, and 5.8% of those aged 30-44. Those aged 30-44 were most likely to strongly support the invasion and those aged 18-29 were most likely to strongly oppose it. Age is only weakly related to this question ($V=.099$) and the relationship is not

Figure 7: Support/Oppose Invading Iraq by Age Group



² Results for African Americans/Blacks are illustrative, but should be treated with caution because few cases were part of the sample collected before the President’s speech (6 cases). Differences are statistically significant in both cases ($p=.024$; $p=.006$) and strong to moderate (.288 to .185), but in the case of comparisons before the speech should be treated with caution.

statistically significant ($P=.361$). The relationship remains non-significant when controlling for before and after the President’s speech ($p=.737$ and $p=.182$ respectively) but becomes a bit stronger ($V=.162$ and $V=.128$ respectively). It is interesting to note that before the speech, the youngest aged group had the largest percentage in the “don’t know” category (24.4%) and this dropped dramatically to 7.7% after the speech (see Figures 8 and 9). The percentage in the “don’t know” category increased slightly for the oldest age group (65 and older) from 12.2% to 16.16%.

Figure 8: Support/Oppose Invading Iraq by Age Group Before President’s Speech

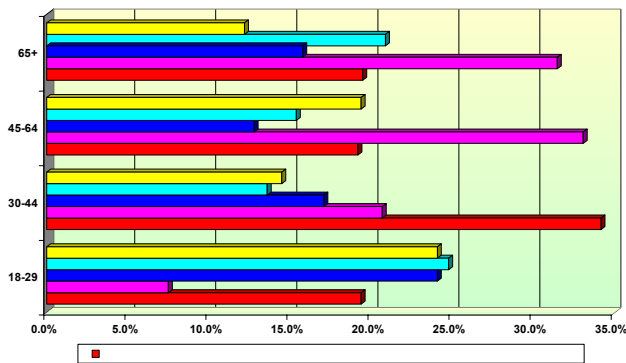
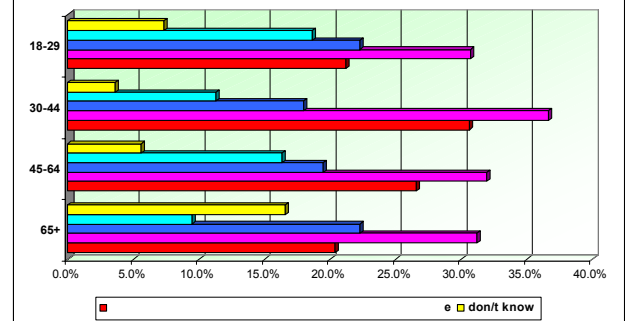
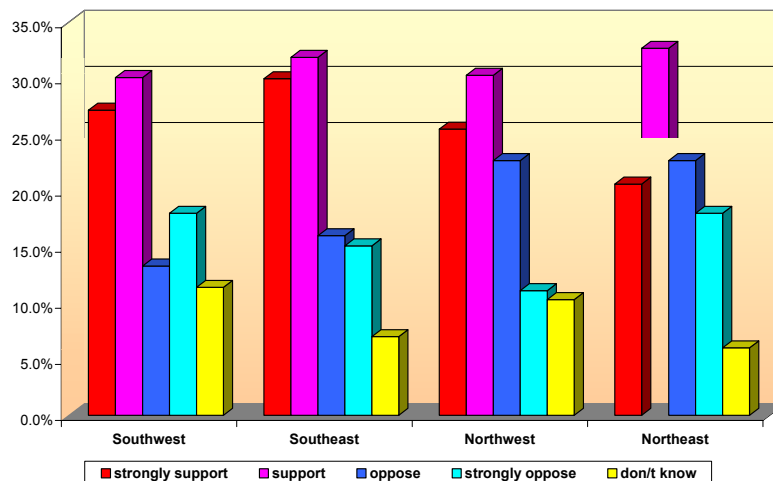


Figure 9: Support/Oppose Invading Iraq by Age Group After President’s Speech



Finally we explored support for and opposition to the proposed invasion of Iraq by geographic quadrant of the city. Results indicated that those on the West side (both Southwest and Northwest) were most likely to fall into the “don’t know” category (see Figure 10). Those on the East side (both Southeast and Northeast) were most likely to “support” the invasion. Individuals living in the Southeast quadrant were most likely to “strongly support” the invasion (30.0%) followed closely by those living in the Southwest quadrant (27.2%). Those living in the Southwest and Northeast quadrants were most likely to strongly oppose the proposed invasion (18.0% each). However, the differences are not statistically significant ($p=.610$) and the relationship is weak ($V=.09$).

Figure 10: Support/Oppose Invading Iraq by Geographic Area



Looking at the results before and after the Presidents speech (see Figures 11 and 12) shows a large decrease in the percentages saying “don’t know” among those living on the West side (both Northwest from 25.6% to 6.3% and Southwest from 10.4% to 7.8%). Support for the invasion increased substantially among those living on the Southeast from 12.2% to 34.1% after the speech, increased from 24.1% to 32% among those residing on the Northwest, and increased from 25.9% to 35.1% among those living on the Northeast. Among those residing on the Southwest, opposition to the invasion increased after the speech (9.2% to 15.2% opposed; 6% to 23% strongly opposed). Neither relationship (before ($p=.130$) or after the speech ($p=.871$)) is statistically significant, although the relationship before the speech is much stronger ($V=.245$) than after the speech ($V=.086$).

Table 11: Support/Oppose Invading Iraq by Geographic Area Before President’s Speech

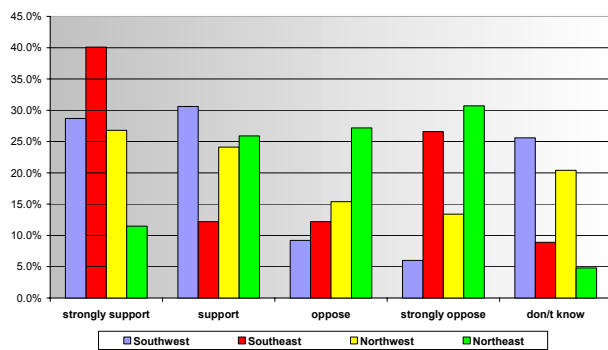
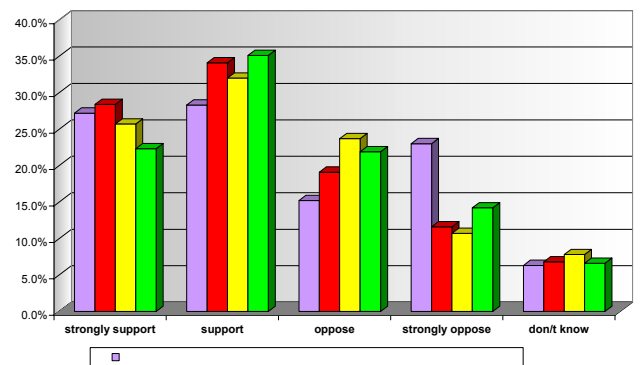


Figure 12: Support/Oppose Invading Iraq by Geographic Area After President’s Speech



Results from San Antonio are similar to those from national surveys in supporting the President’s proposal (see Table 1). Comparing the national results (Table 1) during the period of time data were collected in Bexar County (Figure 1), we see that while respondents from San Antonio had a slightly higher percentage of people in the “don’t know” category, overall most approved the invasion plan. In recent weeks, national support for the invasion has increased steadily. The latest CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup poll results indicate that nearly 6 in 10 Americans support an invasion of Iraq to oust Saddam Hussein.

2002	% Favor	% Oppose	% No opinion
Nov 8-10	59	35	6
Oct 21-22	54	40	6
Oct 14-17	56	37	7
Oct 3-6	53	40	7

Source: CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup poll

Conclusion: Overall we would have to agree that the President's speech, along with the extensive media coverage about it, was effective in gaining support for his proposal to invade Iraq. In most cases the percentages in the "don't know" categories dropped dramatically with most of those moving into the "support" category. It seems clear that the power of President Bush's message came through to respondents living in the San Antonio area. While people were supportive prior to the speech, the percentages supporting his proposal become stronger after the speech.